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How does the Church’s ministry make a difference in Church Schools?

February 2021

**We asked three Church School leaders to outline the impact of ordained and lay ministry in respect of Governance and Chaplaincy. Here are their responses:**

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| Our parish priest provides a spiritual steer and wisdom to our governing body, promoting a prayerful approach to governance and advocacy within the community. With other foundation governors in the school, he supports the governors and school leaders in ensuring our Christian Vision is seen in practical and real life ways in the community and school. He and the wider church team (we have the benefit of a Growing Faith Leader as well as volunteers who work with us in school) are an integral part of the staff team with a strong physical presence in school (even in covid!). He is a go-to person when we are worried about a member of staff or a family (this morning I called him for practical and prayerful support for one of our families who are really struggling). Our children see him and the team as highly relevant and respected. He and our Growing Faith Leader are also involved in wider trust work, including a current working party around the Equalities Act.  This year our opportunities to work with the church community have been very much restricted. However, we have previously been able to join in with the church charity collections for the local food bank and homeless shelters, to engage in Thy Kingdom Come week actively alongside other members of the church, and to host the Sunday School on site, promoting this with our families. We also promote Messy Church, and as school leaders attend church services when we can as a visible link between school and church. We were proud to take part in the licensing service of our parish priest and to be able to make a presentation of gift of a Vine to him on this occasion as an integral part of the service. |

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| St Simon and St Jude school  have a very close relationship with the church and the church community. The school has benefitted from volunteer readers in school, and music tuition from parishioners. The school attends  church monthly for worship, inviting parents to join us in that worship. The wider work in the community is also invaluable, the church and school support the foodbank with in school events and staff volunteering at the foodbank. The church have on serval occasions provided items such as clothes, toys and beds for the school community. In the holidays staff from the school work with the church to feed the community, through weekly breakfast, lunch and dinner collections. When we are not in lockdown, the church offers support in the holidays with drop in sessions, art days, craft packs,, place to be events, again staff from the school support this.  Weekly we advertise the church events on our newsletter, as well as all the more informal things that happen, such as meetings with church representatives either via zoom or in person, looking at the SIAMS work of the school, visiting the school to talk to the children and looking at how the work of the church  can complement the work of the school and vice versa. |

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| Reverend X is our parish priest and is an integral part to every aspect of school life.  Her impact on the Governing Body is one of consistent support – meetings are always attended (including extras and extraordinary!) with a constant commitment of time/support to implement new ideas.  Her support is spiritual, practical and ensures that a Christian focus/input is always there to guide practice.  Every governor will be able to give an example of support, advice and the contribution she makes and the importance of her role to the Governing Body.    Both the Church and Revd X’s impact on the school is huge.  We continually benefit from her time and guidance in the delivery of the curriculum, development of policy and practice and helps to ensure that procedures are supportive to the well-being of all.  For staff, she is a constant support through staff prayer, personal support for good and bad times and a listening and accessible ear at all times.  For the children, her visits are always enjoyed, eagerly anticipated (she is seen as everyone’s friend/support); she provides guidance and structure through collective worship (virtual/in person), time for a lunchtime club (Worship Workshop) to guide KS2 children to further their spirituality and guide for baptism, confirmation, and guidance/development on the School Vision.  As a headteacher, I find Reverend X’s support to be a constant throughout all times.  Her love for our school is unwavering and her time seems to be limitless.  Importantly, I would say that every member of the school community would feel that they were “known” by Reverend X due to her ability to connect effectively with us all.    The school’s relationship with the wider community has benefitted and grown under Reverend X’s care.  She provides direct contact with our wider family contacts with support in difficult times, prayer stones and prayers for bereavement support, even if families are not Church attendees – she is seen as a supportive extension to school provision!  Reverend X connects the entities of School, Church and Community together through bringing all elements together to celebrate joint services/occasions such as Holy Communion, Harvest, Christmas and Easter, which I know the regular attendees at Church really enjoy and appreciate.  All are welcome together and encouraged whoever they are.    For our Church school, the partnership of Church and School is vital and an integral part of our lives. |

**Carolyn Lewis DDE**